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THE DIRECTION OF REPORTING

Since requirements are an organic part of intelligence collection, it is difficult to comment on the requirements portion of this schedule without straying to comment on the organization of the whole block. The fact is that requirements cannot be segregated from operations any more than reporting can. Requirements in the generic sense (as, for example, in DCID 1/3, the Priority National Intelligence Objectives) are the first cause of operations; requirements in the specific sense (as in the brief drawn up for a particular agent capability) provide the direction of those operations. To "accent requirements as Case Officer direction" is to imply that requirements have other, separate functions. This is nonsense. Requirements are case officer direction.

It can be argued that the formal Requirements to which most of us have been exposed in the Clandestine Services have not always provided the kind of direction the case officer needs. Such a view is, to coin a phrase, fighting the problem. Practical direction, in the form of realistic collection requests, is the purpose of the requirements system regardless of whether or not that purpose has been achieved in the past. The case officer, most vitally concerned with getting practical direction, must be able to recognize good direction when he sees it, and to demand it if he is not getting it. He should be made aware of the types of general guidance available to him, and of the ways to get specific guidance when he needs it. He should learn to refine the guidance he gets into specific assignments for his agent, assignments tailored to that agent's qualifications, access, and method of communication. Specific reporting depends on specific assignments.

No discussion of practical case officer direction is complete without full consideration of the case officer's role in evaluation. Although the responsibility for formal and final evaluation of intelligence information rests with the customer analyst, the case officer cannot afford to be indifferent to the product for which he and his agent were hired. The case officer who passively accepts vague, incoherent, or ambiguous agent reports and merely jams them into a prescribed form is certainly increasing his own workload, for it is much easier to process a good report than to patch up a bad one. Far more significant, however, is the fact that such a case officer has failed to assure his own worth as well as that of his project. He has neglected to train his agent in the basic task of reporting, and he has shown his agent that he is either unwilling or unable to comment intelligently on the information acquired by that agent at some personal risk. This situation not only lowers agent morale, agent opinion of the case officer's professional competence,

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and ultimate value of the product to the intelligence community; it is, for the shrewd agent, a clear invitation to fabricate.

Student case officers, then, must be directed to look at each reports exercise as something more than a matter of form. They should be required to make constructive comments that can be used to improve the agent's reporting skill. When this suggestion was voiced earlier this year, during the running of OC #6, the reply was that the screening of student comments would take a great deal of instructor time. It would be time extremely well spent.

In summary, requirements coverage in case officer training should not be a rehash of intelligence community organization, nor should it be a sterile discussion of forms and channels. It should, instead, be a thorough consideration of the principles outlined above, with concrete examples of the way these principles can be applied in practice.



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